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Mark Carney

WARMONGER



- ✦ **Supports US-Israeli attack on Iran**
- ✦ **Sends arms for Gaza genocide**
- ✦ **Billions in increased military spending**

International Women's Day 2026

Rise and Resist - Uniting for a new world

by: Carolyn Egan

Once again women and their allies are taking to the streets of Toronto for International Women's Day and demanding justice. We have seen the rise of the far-right in countries around the world calling for the roll back of hard won rights, fought for by the women's liberation, anti-racist, 2SLGBTQ and Trans movements, and we are fighting back.

We need only look south of the border to the United States where right wing forces have been organizing for years, and have forced legislative changes that have taken away the reproductive rights of millions, denying the right to abortion, charging physicians and others who are heroically trying to provide this necessary health service. Grassroots groups often led by Black and Brown activists have been leading the fight against these devastating attacks.

The vicious repression of racialized migrants and immigrants by the Trump led federal government has brought deaths, injuries, imprisonment and deportations. ICE has terrorized people across the country, occupying cities and stomping on basic rights. We have seen the people of Minneapolis rise up against this. They have organized neighbourhood by neighbourhood, protecting their fellow Minnesotans of all backgrounds. Trade unions have organized with community groups and have built

mass demonstrations and walkouts from workplaces. Their actions inspired people across the US and around the world.

The theme for International Women's day in Toronto this year is "RISE AND RESIST! UNITING FOR A NEW

front of trade unions and community groups comes together every year to organize a militant rally and march which attracts many thousands. The speakers this year include migrant workers, anti-racist activists, trade unionists in struggle, a leader from the

health care, education and social services by the provincial and federal governments. Canada's federal government is organizing mass deportations of migrant workers and students. And they are organizing strongly against the deportations. The Carney Liberals

reduction in the federal public service with more than 40,000 jobs on the chopping block. This is just the tip of the ice berg with attacks on Indigenous land rights, increased military spending, support for the oil companies.

International Women's Day came into being in 1910 when trade union and socialist women called for a day of commemoration of immigrant women workers in New York City who walked out of their workplaces in a fight for better wages, conditions and respect. We use their actions as an example of the power of working class people to fight back against the exploitation and oppression we are facing every day.

We know that we are up against powerful enemies, but "we are many and they are few". If we join together and use the collective power that is ours in mass actions and strikes we can hopefully turn the tide against the far-right and governments who are trying to strip us of our rights, our jobs, and our dignity.

International Women's Day is one example of this fight back and there are many more to come. On March 28th TEAM (Toronto East Anti-Hate Mobilization) is organizing a demonstration in Toronto's Dentonia Park against the rise of hate and anti-immigrant racism. It will be joining similar events across Europe and the "No Kings" rallies happening throughout the US. We have to continue to broaden and build the resistance. All out March 7th and March 28th!



The IWD march bring thousands onto the streets each year.

WORLD". It is building on the momentum of the broadening fight back. A diverse coalition/united

Minneapolis movement and many more. We are also seeing attacks on

are also strangling immigrant agencies through funding cuts and we are experiencing a drastic

...healthcare continued from page 8

It's also clear who benefits from privatized healthcare. Look at the right-wing think tanks, like the Fraser Institute and SecondStreet.org, who have launched campaigns post-Covid to push for full-scale privatization under the guise of solving the 'crisis' in public healthcare, a crisis of their own making, aided and abetted by politicians like Ford and Smith.

Fraser Institute board members and key personnel have notable ties to private health care entities that stand to benefit from increased privatization. For instance, Shaun Francis is on their board and is also the Chair & CEO of Medcan, a private health care clinic that sells executive health care for thousands of dollars. Francis has also advocated for private health care, authoring an opinion article in the Globe & Mail in 2023. A senior fellow of the Fraser Institute, Dr. Brett Belchetz, founded Maple, which is a virtual care service. Loblaw Companies, through its subsidiary Shoppers Drug Mart, invested millions in Maple and has an ownership share. They charge patients directly for online access to doctors, a practice



United Nurses of Alberta protest Danielle Smith's cuts and privatization

that should be a violation of the Canada Health Act which forbids charging for access to physician care. (So far, they have not been stopped by our provincial and federal governments.)

SecondStreet's founder and CEO, Troy Lanigan, came from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF), which has advocated for two-tier health care. He also previously worked in Virginia in the United States as the National Education Director for the Leadership Institute whose mandate is to train conservatives. In fact, not only did he come from the CTF, a number of his team did as well. A board member named Walter Robinson is a former director at Purdue Pharmaceuticals and former VP at Innovative Medicines Canada – an advocacy group for pharmaceutical companies.

The fight to defend and extend publicly funded healthcare is up against some formidable foes. This is literally the fight of our lives. But if we think about the odds against the original fighters who achieved the setting up of public healthcare in the first place, we can draw inspiration.

The time to join the fight is now.

The NDP and social democracy

by: Sid Lacombe

As the NDP leadership race wraps up we see many familiar patterns emerge. The politics on offer, while better than the alternatives, still fails to meet the ambitions of working people and falls far short of the type of politics required to confront the massive crises that working people are facing.

This isn't new. It seems each time the NDP campaigns for election or are elected into office, they shift to the right. Why does this happen?

Here we explore the roots and politics of social democracy and analyze its limitations as a means of making change under capitalism.

Social democracy

Social democracy has many different variants and threads throughout the history of capitalism. All are products of the historical moment of their emergence and development.

Some have maintained their opposition to capitalism and even moved further to the left while others have embraced the system and shifted right.

There is a tendency for parties that are born out of real struggle from below to maintain a radical face when they burst onto the scene. In those early stages the mass movements that they are connected to will often discipline the leadership to ensure they stay on side with the demands of the workers.

But it is often the case that parties shift rightwards — sometimes very quickly — when they begin to see a path towards achieving their electoral ambitions. It is at this point that the blunting of any real critique of capitalism becomes obvious and the new strategy of using the state to soften the worst excesses of the capitalists emerges.

This paves a path to a very different type of party than the one connected with struggle. The social democrat then sees their role as gifting emancipation to the workers through the use of the electoral process. They become hostile to mass action that may get out of their control and to push for a more concentrated power at the top of the party structure.

As Hal Draper described it in *The Two Souls of Socialism*, “In one part of the spectrum, a number of social democratic parties have virtually eliminated any specifically socialist demands from their programs, promising to maintain private enterprise wherever possible. The social democracy has typically dreamed of ‘socializing’ capitalism from above. Its principle has always been that increased state intervention in society and economy is per se socialistic.”

That tendency towards making peace with the capitalists invariably ends up in a tug of war between sections of the working class who crave radical change and the new leadership that wants to maintain peace with the bosses.

The NDP is part of that tendency which views the capitalist system as reformable and therefore, they have had a tendency to find compromises with the capitalists.

And, indeed in times of capitalist abundance the system is able to allow some concessions to the work-

ing class which suggests that the system can overcome the inequality and exploitation at its heart.

In the post-war years in the west, for example, the growth of the welfare state and the rise in the middle class seemed to indicate that the system was evolving and could be shaped to create a more equitable world that would share the wealth with the workers.

Likewise, in the early years of the 20th century the German Social Democracy, the SPD oversaw a massive expansion in reforms in Germany which led the key theorist Karl Kautsky to argue that capitalism can advance beyond its contradictions and that fundamental change was possible through reforms.

What is often missing from the analysis of these periods is that they were built on a foundation of struggle by working people. The post-war long-boom was a direct product of the mass actions, sit-down strikes and occupations in the late 30's and early 40's which

and when the current capitalist states arose.

As Frederick Engels wrote in the *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, “The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital. Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class.”

The state is therefore a product of the irreconcilable class antagonisms that developed with the development of the proletariat under capitalism.

“But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflict-

ing interests—will ultimately represent their interests—they create a set of “common sense” ideas which are merely a reflection of the ideas of the ruling class.

These ruling class ideas confine the debate about the way forward politically to tinkering about the edges of the system but not challenging the dominance of capital.

This leads many social democratic parties to believe the solution is to move to the centre to gain better media representation, to appease the capitalists so as to become more ‘electable’.

Social composition of social democracy

The modern social democratic party — while often still having an organic connection to the trade unions — effectively represents the interests of the union bureaucracy and those interests are very different than those of the rank and file worker.

The working class is being squeezed each day and has their

rooted in the unions.

We do so not because we expect the party to advance a radical agenda — indeed the party policies are usually very disappointing — but a victory for one of the two capitalist parties provides even fewer avenues for change and cements the power of the ruling class.

A radical social democratic platform can actually shift the mainstream debates on a host of issues to the left and help build a new audience for something more than what the bosses have on offer. It will not in itself have the power to make the change real but it can help expand the reach of the movements from below.

And any successful reformist campaigns can build the confidence of working people to fight back and can provide real material benefits.

Socialists must, therefore, take elections seriously. We do so because the window of an election campaign is a time when millions are talking about politics that can potentially advance left ideas and provide some support for movements.

Agency and social democracy

Marx stated, “That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves.” Social democracy has a very different political program. It supposes that a group of elites and technocrats can deliver emancipation to the working class.

But we have seen throughout history that leaving the running of society to a small elite at the top only brings with it the pressures to conform to the ideas and policies of that politically dominant class.

The only way around this in practice is the self emancipation of the working class. Workers ideas change in struggle. It is on the picket lines that workers understand their need for alliance with fellow workers against the boss. It is in the struggle for reforms that people run into the wall of the intransigence of the capitalists to maintain or grow their profits.

This struggle means people begin to ask questions not just about one policy or another but about the running of the system as a whole. They begin to see the need for mass class unity beyond the divisions — race, gender, religion — foisted on us by the ruling class and begin the process of building a new world without division among the vast majority.

The struggle also challenges the perception, drilled into us from an early age, that the only people who can run society are a group of experts and elites at the top.

So while we vote for social democrats in elections because they are the best option on offer we recognize that real revolutionary change will only come about with the mass movement of conscious workers from below confronting the whole system.

The revolutionary socialist party rather than the social democratic party that is the avenue towards that change. It is in the words of Draper, the party designed “to impel the mass-majority to fit themselves to take power in their own name, through their own struggles.”



saw union power at its height in the west. Capitalism doesn't give anything to workers without a fight.

By neglecting that part of the equation — the workers struggle — social democrats draw the wrong conclusions. They assume that appeals to the reason of the ruling class and a rise in electoral votes will bring enough pressure to bear to change the trajectory of the state away from supporting the interests of the capitalists and towards a more equitable solution.

But if we analyze the history and structure of the capitalist state it becomes clear that these aforementioned instances are aberrations.

The drive towards accumulation and profit are not byproducts of capitalism, they are the central dynamics that animate the system.

For the most part the state remains the “executive committee” of the bourgeoisie - there to represent the interests of the bosses.

The capitalist state

The state is not a benign entity with institutions and structures that can be wielded by workers parties while in power. It is an entrenched structure based on power and wealth. This is a product of how

ing economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.” Engels states.

Social democratic parties will be bound to that ‘order’ which limits their perspective on change. And because the most economically dominant class remains politically dominant regardless of who is holding state office, social democrats will always feel a pressure from the right-wing and the ruling class to conform to the narrow parameters of the electoral process under capitalism.

In the event of a social democratic victory the capitalists will use all the means at their disposal to ensure that the party conforms to the needs of the rich. From investment strikes to capitol flight to a manipulation of the media narrative, they will fight back rather than give any concessions to workers.

Through the mass media—which is both owned and funded by the

hands full with the basics of surviving under the exploitative capitalist system. The union bureaucrat is in a different material position with a much higher salary and more time to be involved in politics. They are also in charge of the purse strings of the union who have the resources to fund the social democratic campaigns.

Again, this will provide the social democrat with a perspective that doesn't align with the actual needs of the workers. Recently we have seen the result of this as millions of workers abandon the NDP and look to other ideas on offer — particularly from the far-right.

As long as the social democratic party confines itself to the rules of the existing capitalist system, they will find themselves at odds with the needs of the workers and within a framework that blunts calls for radical change.

Socialists and social democracy

But having laid out some limitations to social democracy it is important for socialists to still take the politics of these parties seriously. When we call for a vote for the NDP it is because it is a class vote that still connects to the party

From Iran to Palestine

Stop the US/Israeli war machine

by: Sid Lacombe

The attack on Iran is illegal and unjustified and will further destabilize the region already in the throes of violence initiated by the US and the Israeli state.

The Israelis started the attack and the US was quick to join them. Their justifications for the war have little to no basis in fact or logic. Marco Rubio stated that the US needed to join in a 'preemptive' attack to stop Iran from firing at US bases in the region — which it only did in retaliation for the Israeli/US attack in the first place.

They state that the goal is to change the regime in Iran in solidarity with the people protesting their government in that country. All the attack has done is solidify the ruling class position inside Iran. Whenever there is an attack of this kind, people tend to rally around their rulers in the hope that they will protect them. It also gives the rulers further justification to shut down opposition movements.

You cannot bomb people and call it liberation. The only path to freedom for the Iranian people is through self-determination and independent struggle.

Iranian workers protesting their government have made the same case:

"The Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company stresses the necessity of continuing independent, conscious, and organized protests.

We have said it many times, and we repeat it again: the road to liberation for workers and working people does not run through manufactured "leaders" imposed from above, reliance on foreign powers, or factions within the ruling establishment. It runs through unity, solidarity, and building independent organizations in workplaces and communities, and at the national level."

The US is in no position to achieve the regime change they desire. This could only be achieved if they led an invasion of Iran but that is unlikely. The Pentagon estimates that the US would need at least a half a million troops to secure the country and they simply don't have that many available.

The only thing that the US can achieve is mass destruction of the country. All they can do is launch air and missile attacks. They will certainly kill a lot of people but that's not the same as establishing control.

And the track record of the US in recent invasions in the region prove that they have no intention of bringing peace or liberation

to the people. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the US installed brutal governments after their invasions. In Afghanistan they installed the drug warlords after ousting the Taliban and in Iraq they instituted a new governing structure designed to create the conditions for sectarian conflict and war.

The third justification for the bombings offered by Trump is the need to end the Iranian nuclear weapons program. It is almost laughable that they are still relying on this argument. After the 12 day

law and norms.

Ironically, the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei means that the US killed the last member of the senior Iranian leadership that was open to negotiating an end to the nuclear program. The new leadership is much more hardline and will be an even more intractable foe.

So the US and the Israelis have started a war with no discernible end goal. The cycle of attacks and retaliation on US bases by Iran has the possibility of spiraling out of



More than 150 students were killed when Israel bombed a girls school in Minab, Iran

war, Trump announced that the Iranian nuclear program had been completely decimated. The US and the Israelis have been saying that Iran is 6 months away from building nuclear weapons for the last 30 years!

The Iranian nuclear program — which was set up by the US under the Shah in the 70s — is the most scrutinized on the planet. Meanwhile the Israelis have a completely illegal nuclear weapons program that has not been subject to any inspections since its inception. And the US is, of course, the only state that has actually used nukes on civilians.

The hypocrisy is astounding but the Trump administration seems to have no ability to self-reflect on these contradictions and sees itself as above the rule of international

control and has certainly made the world a more dangerous place.

So what is behind the war?

The main reason why Iran has been a target for the US for the last 40 years is because it refuses to accept US domination and is part of the rival bloc that threatens US imperial rule.

Iran is allied with the United States' main target — China — and has been an important supplier of fossil fuels that has helped China's economic growth for years.

The Pentagon strategy is one of denying China the ability to secure allied states, thus curtailing its growth.

That is also what is behind the moves to kick China out of Latin America, particularly Cuba, Venezuela and Panama.

The US wants to remain the sole global superpower and will destroy any country that challenges that domination.

The inter-imperial rivalry between the US and China gets closer to outright conflict every time the US launches another assault.

Palestine and Lebanon

The United States' proxy army in the Middle East — Israel — is being counted on to help maintain control of the region.

As the attacks on Iran continue, the Israelis have enacted even more draconian policies against the people of Palestine. They have completely shut Gaza from the outside world and are continuing with their bombings and starvation campaigns. They have shut down checkpoints across the West Bank and accelerated land grabs led by the military and the settler groups.

And they have begun a new invasion and mass bombing campaign in Lebanon. The UN estimates that the Israelis have violated the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon more than 10,000 times, including more than 7,500 air strikes and 2,500 ground incursions.

The fantasy for the Zionists is to create a 'Greater Israel' encompassing huge swaths of territory in Lebanon, Syria, all of the occupied territories and in Egypt. All of this is in contravention of International law but as the genocide in Gaza has laid bare, there are no consequences for Israel as long as they are backed by the US.

Carney and Canadian support

Canadian Prime minister Mark Carney, shamefully, announced full support for the US/Israeli aggression. The Canadian government remains steadfast in its support for US imperialism, as it has for decades under both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

This is a far cry from the speech that Carney gave in Davos chastising the unilateralism and bullying by the US. He was lauded as a great statesman for speaking the truth about how power imbalance really works in the global imperial system.

When it came time to speak up against that abuse after the attacks, Carney showed that he isn't really opposed to the great power game and is, in fact, onside with the goals of the US.

The Canadian ruling class is equally bullish on the war. Canadian fossil fuel companies see the conflict, and the subsequent spike in fossil fuel prices, as an opportunity. The longer the war goes on the better it will be for tar sands producers. So we should not

expect any condemnation from the Carney Liberals.

Indeed, the Liberals are not just onside with this war but are still selling weapons to the Israelis and the Americans. Carney is also looking to oversee the largest increases in weapons production in the history of the country. His budget outlined an increase in annual military spending from \$30 billion to \$150 billion by 2035.

This money will be redirected from crucial social services from healthcare to education to federal services, transit funding, Indigenous supports and environmental programs.

Carney has exposed himself as a warmonger and movements in Canada must continue to target his support for US imperialism.

The anti-war movement in the US

This war is already deeply unpopular in the US. In polling after the attack, only 27% of the population is in favour with a majority opposed.

Demonstrations began within hours. At the time of writing there have been hundreds of protests across the country.

All this is happening in a context of cratering popularity for Trump. The movement against his racist ICE thugs attacking and killing Americans has been broad and deep.

The impact of the Israeli genocide cannot be overlooked as part of our understanding of the shifts in consciousness of the American people. Recent polling showed a staggering shift towards support for Palestine. Gallup polls show that in the 18-34 year old range, 17% supported Israel and 65% supported Palestine. This is a dramatic change from a few years ago.

We are watching the US empire in a period of decline. The US remains the most powerful economic and military power globally but they are spending a huge amount of time and money to maintain that position. History teaches us that imperial overstretch eventually exhausts the resources of the core.

They may look all powerful now but that will change. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, initial swift victories made the US look unassailable but both wars ended in humiliating defeat.

Since the war in Vietnam, a combination of the resilience of the resistance movements under attack and a mass anti-war movement combined to force the US to end these wars with little or no gains. If that same constellation of forces can come together this time we can hasten the demise of US imperialism.

How Iran's 1979 revolution deposed hated Shah

by: Rob Hoveman

On 16 January 1979, the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, fled to sanctuary in Anwar Sadat's Egypt. Less than four weeks later the Iranian monarchy was finished.

It was a remarkable development. For some 25 years, Pahlavi had presided over a ruthless dictatorship, ever since the Western-engineered coup against the left wing nationalist Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953.

Pahlavi used the state and revenues from Iranian oil to finance modernisation of the economy and to build up his armed forces to become what was estimated to be the fifth largest military in the world. Iran was the most important ally of the United States in the Middle East alongside Israel. From 1973, its Tehran capital was the headquarters of America's CIA Middle East operations.

However, the Shah alienated wide sections of Iranian society. His government was corrupt and the benefits of capitalist development went overwhelmingly to the rich, and the Pahlavi family in particular. The liberal intelligentsia opposed the restrictions on freedom imposed by the authoritarian dictatorship. The small shopkeepers of the bazaar, the political backbone of the conservative clergy, were increasingly

squeezed by big business.

The workers in the oil industry and beyond hated the government managers and unions controlled by the Shah's brutal Savak secret service. And national minorities—such as Kurds, Baluchis and many others—resented the denial of their national rights. From June 1977 mass demonstrations began to erupt with a peaceful marches of Tehran's shanty-town population. Demonstrations were met by brutal repression, with the Shah's army murdering many demonstrators.

But the dictator also began to make concessions, particularly to the religious opposition. Far from buying off the opposition, he only encouraged it by displaying apparent weakness and indecision.

Crucially, in the Autumn of 1978, oil workers in Tehran went on strike. The state killed dozens of workers on Black Friday, 8 September, leading to strikes spreading to other cities and oil centres. This was a decisive blow against the Pahlavi regime which was dependent on oil revenues.

Out of these strikes there began to emerge workers' councils, or Shoras, seeking to take over control of the workplaces and get rid of managers appointed by the Shah. These could have begun to form the basis of a genuine workers' revolution of the kind not seen since October 1917 in

Russia.

Unfortunately, the politics of the main leftist organisation, the Tudeh party, failed to effectively lead the emerging challenge to Iranian capitalism posed by the Shoras. As a Communist party, it followed a line supported by the Soviet Union. Tudeh rallied behind the religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who returned from exile to Iran on 1 February 1979.

The dominant idea on the Iranian left was that Iran was too economically underdeveloped, and the hold

of Islam too great, for there to be a socialist revolution in Iran. But Iran was in fact more developed economically than Russia had been at the time of its 1917 revolution, and the Iranian working class was increasingly confident to challenge for power.

In addition, the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist politics championed by the leading Iranian intellectual, Ali Shariati, had great popular appeal, despite his death two years before the revolution. Indeed, Ayatollah Khomeini felt obliged to

adopt some of his rhetoric.

Sadly, any semblance of progressive politics was soon to be dumped as Khomeini increasingly consolidated power in the Islamic Republic established in a popular referendum in March 1979.

Khomeini's increasingly reactionary rule did not go uncontested. In particular, there were mass demonstrations of women opposing the imposition of the hijab. But all forms of opposition were ultimately brutally suppressed using the so-called revolutionary guards, a new version of the Shah's Savak.

Leftist parties were banned and its leaders arrested. Some were later executed in what amounted to a counter-revolution. The Islamic fundamentalists were aided in this purge of the left by the launch of a Western-backed war against Iran by the Saddam Hussain dictatorship in Iraq. More than a million Iranian and Iraqi soldiers died in the eight-year war that began in 1980.

But the Iranian Revolution demonstrated that even the apparently most brutal of dictatorships can be toppled when there is a mass popular insurgency. And it shows that the one thing the Iranian people don't want or need today is regime change at the behest of Israeli and US imperialism.

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Iranian revolutionaries against the US backed puppet

Hands off Cuba

by: Canan Sahin

On January 29, Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14380, declaring Cuba an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to US national security and foreign policy, and announcing a new national emergency framework aimed at cutting oil supplies to the island. The executive order claims Cuba hosts Russia's largest overseas signals intelligence facility, deepens cooperation with China, and provides a permissive environment for 'terrorist' groups.

The US aims to bring Cuba to its knees by starving it of fuel. After the seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro & Cilia Flores on January 3 and the subordination of Venezuela to US demands, the United States moved to cut oil flows into Cuba, first via Venezuela and then by coercing Mexico, using the embargo as a deadly instrument of regime change. This is the same strategy used for Iran. Trump's sanctions regime targets entire populations, treating mass suffering as leverage. Today in Cuba, public transportation and aviation have stopped; hospitals have cancelled operations; schools cannot function, and even basic food distribution is not possible from one end of the Island to the other. Shamelessly, Trump and Marco Rubio point to the resulting collapse as proof that the Cuban government has "failed," and float a "friendly takeover" as if capitulation were a gift

to Cuban people.

The US has been using negotiations as blackmail. Trump's method is to create intolerable conditions and then demand total surrender, whether in Gaza ceasefire talks, pressure on Mexico, the coercion of Venezuela, the assault on Iran, or the current siege of Cuba. Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel has said his government is willing to talk only "from a position of equals, with respect for our sovereignty, our independence, and our self-determination." That demand for equality is precisely what Trump and Rubio refuse to do.

When we read the policy of sanctions and embargo alongside Trump's National Security Strategy of November 2025, where a "Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine" is advanced, the Western Hemisphere appears as a geopolitical priority where "outside influence" must be rolled back and "strategic locations" secured. Cuba is being targeted because its assertion of independence defies this hemispheric order.

Today, Cuba is also being woven into a broader escalation of violence that includes open war. On February 28, the United States and Israel launched an unjustifiable war against Iran. It is no accident that US hawks are signalling Cuba as a next move. In early January, after the US operation in Venezuela, Marco Rubio warned on NBC that Cuba is "in a lot of trouble," adding, "If I lived in Havana and I was

in the government, I'd be concerned." Lindsey Graham followed with the same message in cruder terms: "You just wait for Cuba." Then, on February 27, Trump floated a "friendly takeover of Cuba," claiming Havana "has no money" and is talking to Washington. By now, the world has learned what US "talks" mean: either capitulation or strangulation.

Trump desperately wishes this lethal siege to be the final move within the longer war of the US on Cuban sovereignty. The US has been trying to break Cuba for 67 years. A declassified 1960 State Department memo by Lester Mallory recommended de-

nying "money and supplies" to Cuba to reduce wages and provoke "hunger, desperation, and the overthrow of government." The full embargo was formalised under Kennedy in 1962. Over decades, Washington tightened the screws through measures designed to punish not only Cuba but any third party that dares to trade with it, including the extraterritorial machinery of Helms Burton in 1996. As can be seen, humanitarian disaster is an intended outcome. Trump 2.0 has finessed this strategy to its extreme, turning sanctions and embargo into a deadly collective punishment instrument.

That is why "Hands off Cuba" is

a working-class demand. When fuel is cut off, hospitals cannot conduct vital surgeries, public transportation collapses, food distribution breaks down, and the basic social reproduction of life becomes impossible, these conditions weaken popular struggles. Lethal sanctions shrink the space for popular organisation and independent working-class politics. Cuba's 2021 protest wave emerged amid shortages and crisis, and it included working class organizations that criticized the government from the left. We support the Cuban working class in their fight which is why it is crucial to oppose the US embargo which suffocates the working-class capacity to develop an independent voice and to win material gains.

Cuba's future belongs to people in Cuba. It does not belong to Trump, Marco Rubio, or an imperialist doctrine that treats the Caribbean as a privatized US lake. Today, it is vital to build an anti-war movement that challenges Trump's economic and military warfare and demands the immediate end to the embargo and sanctions. A victory for Trump would only benefit the capitalist class and the far right in the US and in the Western Hemisphere, including Latin America. A victory for Trump would strengthen the US imperialist control over the Caribbean as a strategic region for global capitalism. Hands off Cuba, hands off Venezuela, hands off the Western Hemisphere, and hands off Iran.



End the blockade on Cuba

Movie review: No Other Choice

by: Faline Bobier

Directed by Park Chan-wook

No Other Choice is a movie for our times but may remind you of another film that also depicts the ravages of capitalism, more at the beginnings of automation and industrialization – Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times*. *Modern Times* was released in 1936 when capitalism had entered a crisis from which fascism seemed like the logical conclusion. The famous scene of the little tramp getting caught in the cogs of the factory machinery is an apt comparison to Chan-wook’s film.

The movie’s title is repeated at various points in the movie – first by the American executives who take over Solar Paper, a Korean company, where the protagonist, Man-su (Lee Byung Hun), a low-level manager who has given 25 years of his life to the company, is fired because he refuses to come up with a list of employees to be made redundant by the new owners.

He plans to make a heroic speech explaining to his new bosses why they shouldn’t let workers who have accumulated skills and shown loyalty to the paper company be thrown on the scrap heap. He barely gets out a few words before the American executives sweep by him into a waiting limo, muttering, ‘No other choice’.

Chan-wook’s movie shows us the way the economic system traps workers into ever narrowing possibilities if they want to survive. At the beginning of the movie, we’re presented with the American, or rather, Korean, dream – the family BBQ complete with happy couple, two children and two dogs. Man-su has been gifted eel from his

bosses as a thank you for his service to the company, just shortly before he will be sacked.

Within six months they are in danger of losing their home, along with sacrificing Netflix (a loss which particularly upsets Man-su’s teenage step-son) and tennis lessons for Man-su’s wife Miri (Son Yejin). Their young daughter, who is a child prodigy on the cello and who speaks only to repeat phrases she has heard from others, needs to move to the next level of teaching

to have any chance of reaching her potential and this now seems out of reach.

The brutality of the economic system is mirrored in the plan Man-su devises to get back his former life. It involves subterfuge and violence, taking out the two main rivals for a new manager’s job at another paper company. Chan-wook plays this partially for comedy, as Korean filmmaker Bong Joon-Ho often does in his films, despite the grim nature of their subject matter, depicting as they do the gap between the super wealthy

and the rest of us and the violence of an economic system that creates and perpetuates these gross inequalities and which turns those on the sharp end of capitalism against each other, rather than against the system.

Lee Byung Hun, the actor who plays Man-su, is powerful in this role, as he believably expresses both tenderness and rage. People may recognize him from the Netflix series *Squid Game*, which similarly lampoons the violence of the economic system. It seems not so surprising that a country like South Korea, which fought tooth and nail to become a middle capitalist power, one of the Asian tigers, did so only with immense sacrifice on the part of ordinary workers. The rise of Korean capitalism, as in every other industrial nation, succeeded on the backs of labour, which is then sacrificed when capitalism stumbles.

There is comedy in Chan-wook’s movie, but it is a savage humour, similar to what we saw in Bong Joon Ho’s masterpiece *Parasite*. If the movie can be generally described as a black comedy it also packs a gut punch in its final vision of a newly reconstituted workplace where workers are largely absent, except for Man-su, who supervises alone in an empty factory floor as AI and machines operate in a largely human-free environment.

Chan-wook dedicated his movie to Costa-Gavras, the Greek-French master of political cinema. Costa-Gavras made his film *Le Couperet* (*The Axe*), as did Chan-wook, based on a 1997 novel “*The Ax*” by American writer Donald E. Westlake. All of this to say that the story of capitalism and the way it treats workers, the people who create all wealth through their labour, is strikingly transposable from one country to another.



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The threat from the far-right

by Brian Champ

On February 22 a dozen or so masked men in black unfurled a Nationalist-13 (aka NS-13) flag at Hamilton City Hall behind a “No Mercy for Pedos” banner, then marched through the streets. NS-13, the Second Sons and other white supremacist, transphobic, far-right groups are organizing racist fight clubs, seeking to stir up violence against marginalized people. Their targets include Muslims, immigrants and refugees; trans,

Canada First’s next rally on February 21. Yet on the day, Canada First only mustered about 100 haters in Sankofa Square, protected again by the police. The counter protesters were able to dominate the messaging for passers-by with “Shut Down Hate” and “Blame Billionaires Not Immigrants” banners, along with chanting and a dance party organized by the Auntie Fashion Dance Troupe.

Canada First is virulently Islamophobic and racist, and yet they are ridiculed by the harder fascist core for not being racist enough. Videos on social media of bickering between different

– at the centre of this were fascists and Nazis colluding with police and military forces.

Just as counter protesters were able to overcome the challenge of confronting people unconcerned with halting the spread of COVID-19, Trudeau invoked Emergency Powers to shut down the Convoy. This fueled the far-right fire, while side-lining the grassroots forces that offered a true alternative.

At different times, the target of the far-right has shifted. For a time, their targets were trans and non-binary people. They have also organized around denial of the fact of Indigenous

referendum questions around cutting off social provisions to immigrants to deflect from her own government cuts.

Carney’s Bill C-5 fast-tracks projects in the “national interest” and pits the interests of workers for jobs against Indigenous land defenders standing up all across so-called Canada. Rising military spending and support for war on Iran, comes at the expense of public services and jobs, and First Nation band councils will receive money only if they sign on to projects built over their land. Anti-immigrant Bill C-12 strengthens racist border controls, feeding



non-binary and queer people; and anti-fascists.

This is the street thug core of the rising far-right menace in Canada, closely aligned with the Diagonol movement that emerged at the time of the “Freedom” Convoy in Ottawa. The organizers boast their membership includes active and retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces. A Hamilton police constable was suspended in August for posts favourable to the Second Sons.

Far-right groups are swimming in a wider stream of hate. “Canada First” have been mobilizing across the country to call for “mass deportations” and an end to “mass immigration”. They were run out of Christie Pits last September, but still marched through the streets. A month later at Queen’s Park, counter protesters mobilized again, but the haters were again able to march.

Organizing to stop the hate

On January 10 at Toronto City Hall, counter protesters outnumbered the haters at a rally called by Canada First. When Canada First started to march, there was a more concerted attempt to block them, but they were saved by the cops. The police then formed a phalanx around the haters, using extreme violence to clear their path through the streets. Much of the media coverage following this event echoed unsubstantiated claims by police that protesters had thrown urine and feces at them in order to justify the police violence.

Given this media coverage, it was more challenging to build the counter protest at

elements in the Canada First contingent showed the divisions that prevented them from marching that day.

Resistance is fertile

The lesson is that, although it is nowhere near big enough, the opposition that has mobilized against Canada First is exposing fault lines within the far right. The key is mobilizing enough people with the willingness to confront the far-right and expose their lies.

There is no room for complacency: far right narratives are gaining currency in mainstream politics. And it is Liberal policies that are laying the ground.

Liberal racism

In 2015, Justin Trudeau’s Liberals swept to power promising electoral reform, greater government transparency, taxes on the rich to fund public services, action to solve the climate crisis and a new and better relationship with Indigenous peoples. Their predictable failure to deliver on these promises and the NDP’s role in propping them up has meant that political opposition to the status quo has flowed to the right, not the left.

Conservative Party splits and mergers beginning in the early 1990s has ratcheted their politics farther and farther to the right. Far right groupings inside and outside the Tory party are driving this dynamic. During the pandemic, their ability to build anti-mask and anti-vax mobilizations exploded on the streets of Ottawa in early 2022 during the “Freedom Convoy”

graves at former sites of Indian Residential Schools as documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and ground radar findings.

In the run up to Trump’s re-election in 2024, the focus shifted back to targeting Muslims, immigrants and refugees. The Liberal government, worried about their electoral prospects, began curtailing immigration and international student quotas. But this didn’t save Trudeau and it seemed like Poilievre would be the next Prime Minister.

Trump tariffs and 51st state rhetoric changed the political equation, however, as Carney mobilized Canadian nationalist sentiment more effectively than Poilievre. The Liberals gained 17 seats bringing them to 169, just short of a majority. The Conservatives gained 24. The NDP lost big, losing official party status.

In government, Carney occupies the centre-right, stealing much of the Conservative program while maintaining progressive rhetoric to protect their left flank. Despite Carney axing 40,000 public servants, many union and NDP leaders have failed to articulate a working class response to Carney’s boss friendly agenda.

The BC NDP government is participating in the job cuts and doubling down on settler colonialism. The Carney government similarly is sitting back and allowing provinces – particularly Ontario and Alberta – to privatize healthcare and decimate public education. Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has approved

the narrative that immigrants are to blame for social ills. Bill C-15 gives the government the ability to override labour, environmental, and other laws and regulations that were won through past struggles. While Trudeau’s climate policies were ineffective, Carney has moved even farther away from real climate action.

This legislation and the other programs of the Carney Liberals will make workers’ lives harder. But because opposition to Carney is dominated by the right, blame can be deflected from the Billionaires to immigrants and other marginalized groups.

The far-right Dominion Society of Canada is pressuring Poilievre to support “remigration ... the return of foreigners to their respective homelands.” For them, only “the descendants of the brave pioneers who built this country” are real Canadians – Indigenous peoples are completely erased. If Poilievre won’t support “remigration”, they’ll dump him for a leader who will.

This dynamic creates more space for the far-right to organize. The interconnected cost of living, jobs and public services crises creates the ground for them to grow. The climate and ecological crises makes all these crises worse. As the Tories move rightward and the Liberals follow them it makes the claims of the fascist far-right more respectable.

We must oppose the far-right whenever they try to march and organize. But it is not enough. We must also build the movements that push back against the boss’s attacks that are creating the conditions for the far right to grow.

Stop the OSAP cuts

Ontario students push back on toxic funding announcement

by: Pam Johnson

On February 11, the Ford government announced \$6.4 billion in spending on post-secondary education over four years. This big number belies the fact that the amount will barely move the needle to increase per-student funding and contains a double-barreled poison pill for students. Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will be drastically changed, dropping the grant portion from 85% to 25%, which means students relying on OSAP will be saddled with massive loan debt. Also, the tuition freeze in place since 2019 will end, and costs will rise for already stretched students and their families.

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), this funding charade doesn't even return post-secondary funding levels to what they were a decade ago and maintains the 'embarrassing gap' in per-student funding. Ontario remains in last place in per-student post-secondary funding in Canada.

The Ford government and college and university administrations place the blame for a funding shortfall on the federal international student cap. But what the cap really exposed is that colleges and universities have been using international students, who pay almost three times the tuition of domestic students, to cover the shortfall from Ford's chronic underfunding of the system. During the OPSEU college

support staff strike in the fall, Ford's corrupt scheme of syphoning training funds to the

cutting faculty, staff, and student services. The Ontario Public Sector Employees Union



Students in Courtice walkout against OSAP cuts

private sector through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) also came to light.

College and university administrators are welcoming the funding, but there is no guarantee the money will fund student programs and services. Administrators have massively increased highly paid management positions and funded endless building projects while

(OPSEU) reported that 10,000 faculty and staff were laid off as of last fall. Loyalist College in Belleville now has the same number of managers as full-time faculty. Hundreds of college programs have been cut or suspended, and several campuses have been closed.

At Queen's University in Kingston, the union representing grad student workers

-PSAC 901- was sharply critical of the funding, "Allowing tuition to rise by up to two per cent each year while pushing students toward more debt means many will pay thousands of dollars more over the course of their education. For students already struggling with rising rents, food prices, and stagnant wages, these so-called "modest" increases create serious financial pressure and long-term insecurity."

York Students Federation at York University stated that on top of Ford's cuts, students face extreme rising costs of on-campus services. York University has increased meal plan costs by 16.5%, residence costs by 18%, and parking costs by 12% in just one year.

Ford defended the OSAP cuts and tuition increase, blaming students for choosing 'basket-weaving' courses instead of courses leading to jobs.

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario has responded that, 'Students are paying the price for this government's failures. The Ford government's decision to open the floodgates to tuition increases and the decimation of OSAP will destroy what's left of education in Ontario. Enough is enough - it's time to take to the streets and flex the true power of students in the province.'

There are planned rallies and walkouts from university and college students, high school students and post-secondary staff and faculty who have all pledged to fight Ford's cuts.

Fight to save public healthcare

by: Faline Bobier

With the recent introduction of what is essentially privatized healthcare in Alberta under United Conservative Party (UCP) premier Danielle Smith, the urgency of the fight to save public healthcare across the country has been underlined. Smith's government has passed legislation that allows Alberta surgeons to work in both the public and private health systems.

It means people can pay for things like hip and knee replacements or cataract surgery in a private clinic, while the publicly funded system continues to provide emergency and cancer surgeries. It spells the end of public universal healthcare and introduces privatization and a US-style healthcare system where private insurance companies profit to the tune of billions of dollars and those who can't afford to pay suffer or die. This dire situation requires stepping up and broadening the fight to defend our universal public healthcare system across the country.

In Ontario the Ontario Health Coalition and its member groups across the province met in late January at their Annual Assembly to discuss and vote on an Action plan commensurate with the threat we are now facing.

The plan includes a series of 'Defend public health care rallies' across the province, mass leafletings, activist organizers speaking at community meetings, at union meetings, in neighbourhoods - wherever they can - to counter the lies spread by politicians like Danielle Smith

and Doug Ford. The culmination will be a mass demonstration in Toronto. Activists and members of OHC from across the province will book train cars, all converging at Union Station in Toronto and marching to Queen's Park on May 28.

This plan must include holding not just provincial premiers like Doug Ford and Danielle

Smith accountable for killing public healthcare. It must squarely place the blame also on Carney and the Liberal government.

The federal government has stood silently by as province after province has illegally introduced creeping privatization, going against the Canada Health Act. They should have acted before and must be pushed to act now to save a

system based on the right of all to free, accessible healthcare.

Some have been unwilling to take on the Liberals, seeing Carney as somehow better than Trump, a politician who represents 'elbows up' against so-called Americanization, a politician who is saying 'Canada is not for sale'.

But on the real issues, like the defense of one of the greatest gains of the Canadian working class - a publicly funded healthcare system - which was fought for by millions, Carney is silent, and worse, complicit. He immediately pledged to spend 5% of GDP on militarization when asked to do so by Trump but refuses to enforce the Canada Health Act, which his government has the power to do.

The impetus behind privatization has nothing to do with making health care more 'efficient' or saving a system in crisis. Doug Ford's government in Ontario has chronically underfunded public hospitals to the point where hospitals are now being forced to take out loans from the banks in order to continue operations. They are currently laying off hundreds of healthcare workers who are sorely needed to provide safe, humane healthcare in a publicly funded system.

Ford is pouring billions of dollars into setting up private for-profit clinics that have been increasingly over-selling and charging patients for procedures that are provided in public hospitals at no cost.



Taking the healthcare fight to Carney in Ottawa

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